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Ensuring effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: leadership, action and means

Institutional leadership and the Sustainable Development Goals

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Committee of Experts on Public Administration the paper prepared by Committee member José R. Castelazo. The content of the paper and the views expressed therein are those of the author and do not imply any expression of opinion on the part of the United Nations.

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Institutional leadership and the Sustainable Development Goals

Summary

This paper considers the activities of societies and governments in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It deals with political and administrative issues and emphasizes governments' responsibilities to undertake interconnected tasks for achievement of the Goals. These include engagement of organized society, and citizens generally, in an environment of multiple interests, which will need to be focused on common purposes in order to improve quality of life and ensure preservation of the human habitat.

The 2030 Agenda and the Goals provide an opportunity to test the capacity of political, social, economic and administrative systems. In a complex and ever-changing environment, governments increasingly exercise joint responsibility with the governed, using public policies as an instrument. Attainment of the Goals calls for State policy that includes a comprehensive policy for government administration, public policies agreed between government and society, and a shared and participatory civic policy.

The paper stresses implementation as the decisive process to achieve the targets set for each Goal. The interdependence of the Goals and the responsible participation of society will be translated into cross-cutting public policies only if governments and societies commit to finding joint solutions to implementation problems. This task requires agreement and coordination at the international, regional, national and local levels; adoption of consensual decisions; implementation of joint actions between societies and their governments, monitoring their progress and effects, as well as institution-building and openness to participation by new actors in the design and implementation of Goals-related public policies. These actions are possible if institutional leaderships are involved with the leaderships of society and able to govern jointly.

I. Introduction

1. Institutional leadership to implement the Goals in each country requires the transformation of economic and social conditions through the international commitment; it is a paradigm shift in the balance of power between government and society, in which both are determined to advance towards sustainable development and are therefore prepared to foster and maintain a delicate balance, being poised at the centre of an inclusive consensus-based democracy.

2. Our focus on institutional leadership will basically determine whether it represents a feasible route to the adoption of measurable, agreed, and socially accepted government actions, aimed at implementing the commitments that each Member State made under this agenda.

3. While acknowledging the complexity inherent in all areas — from global to local and vice versa — we must rethink the nature and typology of leadership, the configuration of institutions and, within them, the character of institutional leadership as it is linked to the 17 Goals, the formulation of cross-cutting public policies, the responsibility of government as a whole and of each of the institutions that it comprises, as well as the joint responsibility of society and government.

II. Leadership

4. Leadership is exercised from multiple sources depending on differing political ideologies, and scientific and pragmatic trends. The goal of this analysis is to stimulate a discussion to produce a definition that, despite varying interpretations, is shared by those exploring the concept.

5. On the basis of research on the topic, one can agree that leaders are people who, by virtue of their personal characteristics, possess the ability to observe and interpret circumstances in a particular setting and at a particular time, in order to organize and guide collective actions reflecting the general interest.

6. The analysis of leadership involves various social disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, politics, economics, international relations and psychology. Max Weber[1] recognizes three types of authority: traditional, charismatic and legal-rational. These provide elements of comparison that can be extrapolated to the current situation.

A. Traditional leadership

7. Traditional leadership is noteworthy for its permanence. Its decisions are generally collegial and sometimes require prudence and patience. Its authority and legitimacy are based on unwritten rules and require acceptance by the group of the dictates of the relevant tradition; it may be positive or negative.

[1] Max Weber, *Economía y Sociedad: Esbozo de Sociología Comprensiva* (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002).

8. It is negative if it falls into the hands of a despotic power. It is exercised in closed groups and takes root in sparsely populated or impoverished communities with a weak institutional structure that preordains them to be the victims of a panoply of political and economic power whose interests are sheltered specifically by family traditions and group authority. In extreme cases, its decisions may be imposed by a combination of violence and impunity.

9. Traditional behaviour is common in many parts of the world, even in in countries generally enjoying prosperity, either in isolated parts of their own territory and/or in marginal areas (slums, hovels, shanty towns, ghettoes, lost cities, etc.) of the big cities and metropolises: places where extreme poverty and crime coexist on an uneasy footing and where each group is organized following traditional patterns, although the law is not much in evidence and the struggle between authority and survival is intense and ongoing.

10. On the positive side, recognition and support by the authorities and civil society for the leaders fighting for human dignity complicate rural or urban governance, because of the need not only to improve the environment and services but also to identify, pinpoint and, if possible, rescue persons and organizations acting outside the law; this is an ongoing task required to reduce the inequality created by wealth concentration.

B. Charismatic leadership

11. Charisma is considered to be an attractive trait in a man or woman in power. Unlike traditional leadership, it is embodied in a person. It can have a positive or negative impact on the interests of the group, community, country, etc.[2]

12. The negative impact occurs if followers entrust or actually transfer their loyalty to the person whom they consider to be best able to meet group expectations, especially when that person is proposing a break with the system or pre-established authority which, for various reasons, the group rejects. In a climate of disillusion, a "toxic" charismatic leader tends to push for change with a tenuous and insufficient link to reality; as a result, that leader's proposals are confused and the way to implement them is unclear; even so, the leader still wins new supporters.

13. Such leaders appear to be listening but derive their strength from manipulation. They feel themselves to be in possession of an "indisputable truth" and issue dogmatic diagnoses. Their decisions are usually emotional and seek a cloak of legality for actions taken, trying to build an argument with a veneer of rationality: their own.

14. In a situation of institutional precariousness, this leadership usually overestimates itself and the situation is aggravated if a government regime is spiralling downwards. When this happens, society is attracted to the idea of finding a kind of saviour who will help it to recover or to recover "the promised land".

15. Populism definitely finds an echo in charismatic leadership, which seeks to belittle institutions and possibilities for dialogue, prolongs struggles or postpones solutions, since its goal is to retain the relative power conferred by heading a "movement" with demands that are legitimate or created in order to exert pressure.

[2] Charles Lindholm, *Carisma* (Barcelona, Gedisa, 2001).

16. On the positive side, the charismatic leader can contribute to orderly change by assembling different social forces and actors and encouraging peaceful, civilized and socially productive coexistence through dialogue and negotiation. These supremely political instruments can coalesce desires and guide the collective effort through agreements of a legal, economic and administrative nature that characterize institutional leadership and stem from the legal-rational authority described below.

C. Legal-rational leadership

17. This concept, originally aimed at ensuring that public administration was guided solely by reason and not by sentiment, encouraged — and still does encourage, because of interests and negligence or corruption — bureaucratization in the pejorative sense, which in many and varied cases means immobility.[3]

18. On the other hand, given current global dynamics, it must be realized that institutions need to create conditions of stability conducive to development and that their leaders need to promote and initiate the required transformations. In order to be effective in these circumstances, the institutional leader needs elements of tradition and charisma and must follow the rules of the game of the organization in question.

19. Legal-rational leaders exert a dual influence: influence vested in them by the institution by reason of their functions and also influence determined by the officials' personalities and their ability to give meaning to activities and to facilitate institutional coexistence, based mainly on information, argument, conviction, organization and action,[4] with a public character of general interest, reflecting the functions of the post.[5]

20. This type of leadership limits the discretion of public servants to take decisions and perform duties, both because of the rules applicable to them and because of the need for accountability regarding not only finances but also administrative and political processes.[6]

III. Institutions and institutionality

21. Human beings seek their own self-preservation by belonging to a community,[7] despite the inevitable differences among its members; if they are not able to channel and solve group issues, conflict could escalate and destabilize the system, which by definition is based on cooperation.[8]

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[3] Michael Barzelay, *Atravesando la Burocracia: Una Nueva Perspectiva de la Administración Pública* (Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998).

[4] Giandomenico Majone, *Evidencia, Argumentación y Persuasión en la Formulación de Políticas* (Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997).

[5] B. Guy Peters, *La Política de la Burocracia* (Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999).

[6] María Villoslada Gutiérrez, "El control de la discrecionalidad", Universidad de La Rioja, 2013. Available at http://biblioteca.unirioja.es/tfe_e/TFE000238.pdf.

[7] Aristotle, *Politics*.

[8] Dwight Waldo *Teoría Política de la Administración Pública: El Estado Administrativo* (Madrid, Tecnos, 1961).

22. Hence the need for suitable ways of resolving disagreement, or mitigating its effects. This is confirmed by North,[9] who states that institutions emerge because of the uncertainty involved in human interaction, placing restrictions on conduct contrary to the interests of the group. For this reason, there is a need for institutions devoted specifically to regulating the interaction among the members of society, so that each of them can identify and assess the advantages and obligations of belonging to the group.

23. Clearly democratic institutions are privileged means of governance in societies, with skills that combine principles, values and sensitivity in order to impose rationality on their task and thus order and regulate the behaviour of the members of society, as is appropriate under a democratic rule of law.

24. Government institutions are therefore essential in order to organize and lead countries; they are the means of ensuring its viability by maintaining social cohesion in the situations encountered on a daily basis.

25. Nowadays most societies have public institutions that deal with national, subnational and local issues, with variations determined by the historical, cultural and legal characteristics of each nation.

26. In any rational cooperative effort involving public administration,[10] public institutions ensure that the general interest prevails over individual interests and even outrank private or social institutions with legitimate goals of production and distribution of goods or services and/or non-profit institutions. All organizations are thus regulated by a general and specific legal framework, conferring on them an institutional character.

27. Government institutions exercise leadership that has three distinctive characteristics: authority conferred by law over all other institutions and individuals and, where necessary, legitimate use of force; resources from the economically and socially productive effort of the community; and organizational mechanisms for:[11]

(a) Collection and classification of data on the social, territorial and governmental system;

(b) Priority-setting based on systematized, accurate, timely, relevant and essential information for rational decision-making;

(c) Short-, medium- and long-term planning and budgeting of government activities with the government itself and by the government with organized society and the public;

(d) Ongoing consultation of innovators in order to give innovation a positive meaning and orientation;

(e) Adoption of measures to obtain fiscal or financial resources from national and international sources;

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[9] Douglass C. North, *Institutions Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[10] Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (New York, Harper & Row, 1973).

[11] José R. Castelazo, *Ejes Constitucionales de la Administración Pública en México* (Mexico, Plaza y Valdés, 2014).

(f) Objective and transparent evaluation of outcomes, correction or elimination of unnecessary activities and proposal of new activities to enhance efficiency and effectiveness;

(g) Systemic feedback on decision-making processes,[12] in order to close cycles, create opportunity for progress and deal with relevant challenges.

28. The performance of these tasks requires an institutional culture, created by encouraging behaviour that is compatible with the aims and values of the institution, conscientious, motivated, rewarded and recognized — in other words, an institutionalized way of working.

29. "Institutionality" is demonstrated by responsible behaviour on the part of the public servants leading institutions. It involves the recruitment, selection and training of professional and professionalized staff in the specific dynamic of the organization; with a service mentality, open attitudes, experience, knowledge, work ethic and compliance with the principles and standards governing the institution.

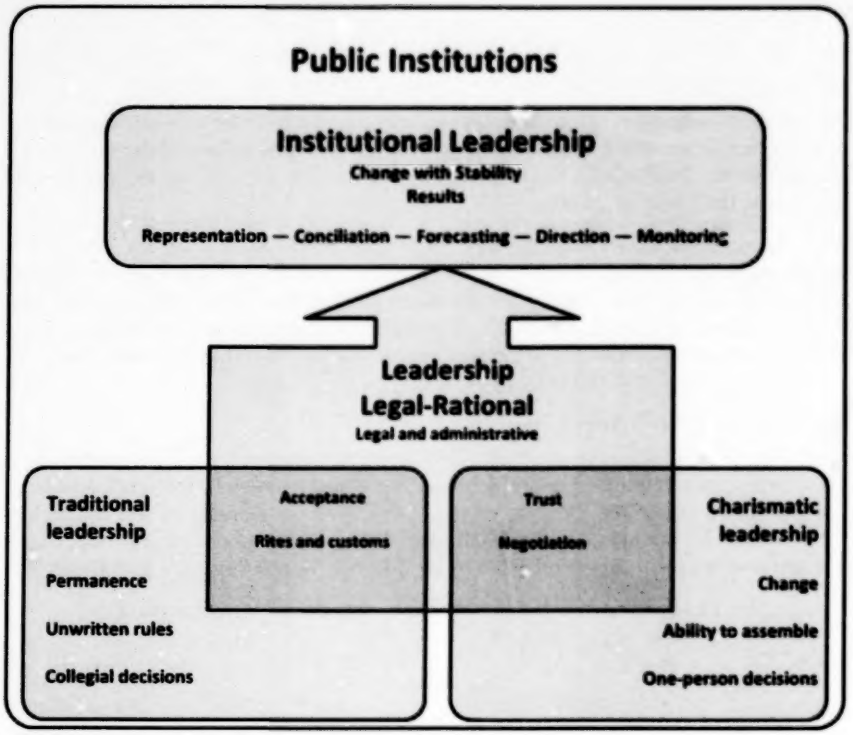
IV. Institutional leadership

30. Democracy requires a more detailed and broader legal framework reflecting the characteristics of the existing society, which retains features of the leadership types mentioned but also introduces innovative procedures to confer legitimacy and authority on the institutional leadership, for instance by creating open governments.

31. Figure 1 shows the correlation of the elements considered in section IV.

[12] David Easton. *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York, Wiley, 1965).

Figure I
Leadership in public institutions



32. Institutional leadership is reflected in the rational component established in the operating rules and the emotional capacity of the public servants leading the institutions, supported by protocols which guarantee change with stability but also by duly legitimized and regularized rites, symbols, customs and traditions. While enhancing the image of the institution, at the same time these favour the current leadership of the publicly accountable officials.[13]

33. The effectiveness of institutional leadership is measured by results: information, communication, use of experience to create knowledge, risk forecasting, intra- and inter-institutional motivation and motivational ability. The following elements are relevant in the case of the government sector:

(a) Representation on the basis of democratic suffrage or a legally established appointment, processed and accepted, which establishes hierarchical levels and lines of interaction in the organic structure concerned (functions, operations and responsibilities).

[13] Adam Wolf, "La Responsabilidad dentro de la Administración Pública", 1999. Available at https://archivos.juridicas.unam.mx/www/bjv/libros/3/1317/4.pdf.

(b) Conciliation, in order to convince superiors, peers and subordinates of the merits of possible courses of action to achieve goals in accordance with institutional rules but using a working method allowing cooperation to take precedence over conflict. Teamwork is valued.

(c) Foresight to anticipate problems or obstacles that will arise en route, choice of options for overcoming them imaginatively and decisively (plan A, plan B, plan C ...).

(d) Management, obtaining results in the conditions selected and acting promptly to handle crises.

(e) Monitoring, ensuring social benefit with ongoing supervision, transparency and accountability.

34. However, this may not work because of the persistent inequality in the world at large and inside each country resulting from the complexity of contemporary society, the plethora of conflicting interests, the social diversity, cultural plurality, market failures, ownership of technology, etc. This complexity has resulted in the emergence of multiple leaderships, with numerous relatively autonomous power centres or polyarchy,[14] in which pressure is usually exerted to defend and promote one's own agenda.

35. It then becomes essential for States to strongly embrace their role of protector of the public interest in economic, political and social processes, by exercising their authority, and to take on the task of enlisting support so that members of society are prepared to coexist and develop under the same roof.

36. Constant social transformations have made change essential, as though it represented a value in itself. Situation is often superimposed on structure. In view of the excitement about change for change's sake, which emphasizes the image and popularity of those who govern, it is worth remembering that institutional leadership requires structural underpinning in order to prevent the rules of the game concerning public accountability from being arbitrarily altered and in order to ensure that social value is maintained over and above what is unimportant.

37. The rites of institutionalized power have become eroded and we have still not found a perfect replacement for them. At this time, institutional leadership is caught in a transition of traditions and customs concerning ways of winning the trust of the public.

38. For these reasons, institutions have to rely increasingly on social organization to enhance collective goals. It is no longer possible to govern solely from traditional ivory towers, without sharing responsibility with the governed through productive consensus to overcome paralysis. The following principles may be useful in this connection:

(a) Overarching State tutelage to protect the rights of the individual and of society and create the essential prerequisites for them to function in the framework of the democracy, justice and freedoms of citizens on which their sovereignty is based.

[14] Robert Dahl, *La Poliarquía* (Madrid, Tecnos, 1989).

(b) Institutional solidarity and solidarity with individuals, with an open mind to understand the situation of all social strata and particularly the most vulnerable and to persist in initiatives and efforts to achieve sustainable social, economic, political and environmental development.

(c) A community commitment made by institutions and people with the government, in response to legitimate social demands and needs, to be gradually solved by established deadlines.

(d) Institutional cooperation and cooperation with people; coordinated action strategy in which each of the parties involved contributes talent, resources, effort and infrastructure for the general good.

(e) Productivity of the institution and of society with individual work supplementing institutional work, both with organized encouragement from society and government.

(f) Institutional respect and respect by the community in order to enhance a personal identity aligned with that of the institution, to recognize the other and be able to assess the qualities of the community in order to take action for the common good.

(g) Interinstitutional, intergovernmental and social inclusion, in order to achieve goals with the help of those who agree to collaborate with ideas, actions and resources to improve the quality of life, regardless of cultural, social, economic, political or ideological differences.

(h) Global commitment, based on commitments made in each country to institutions in general and to the institution to which one belongs in particular, emphasizing resect for the principles and values essential for comprehensive development.

39. Democratic States should therefore enhance their institutional capacity and develop new capacity. This way of governing should include all those concerned, enhance public information, cultivate transparency regarding political and administrative processes and be accountable to society through traditional media and the new social networks.

V. Policies aimed at the Sustainable Development Goals under a democratic rule of law

40. Addressing social needs and demands as a function of the Sustainable Development Goals requires a vision of public administration and the techniques and tools of the discipline that must be applied, which highlights public policies.

41. Essentially, public policies have been shown to be the appropriate instrument for joint responsibility between government and the governed. The Goals will thus find in public policy a favourable mode of implementation.

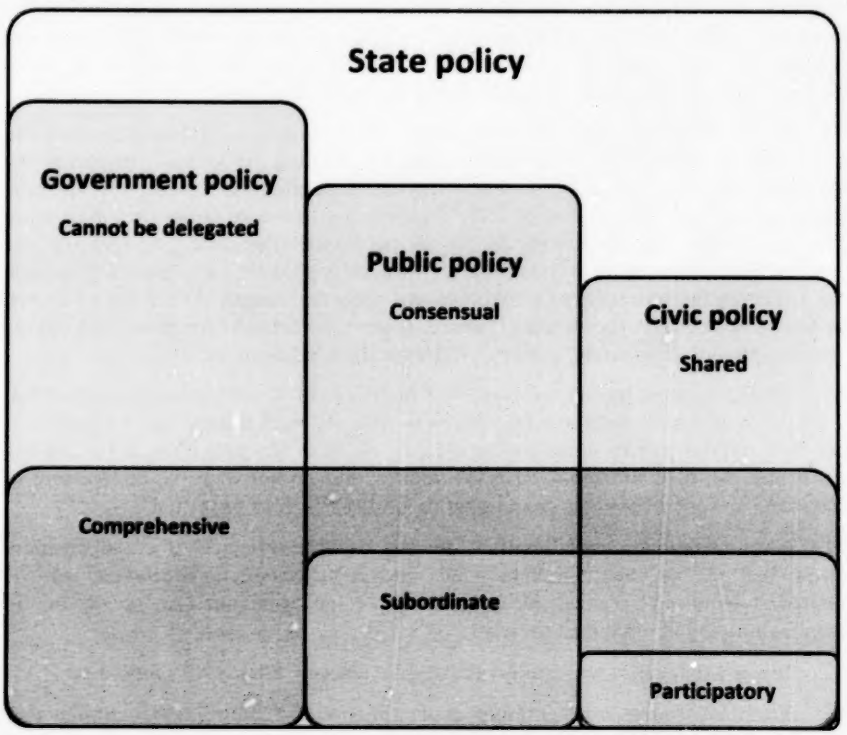
42. Such an approach makes it indispensable to adopt State policy that encompasses the whole system of a country: the customary components of government, population and territory; its institutions and their domestic and external interactions in culture, politics and economics as a whole, with the aim of

maintaining and strengthening the viability and influence of the system in a complex global environment, where the "*sine qua non*" components of its continued existence are solidarity and cooperation.

43. State policy is oriented towards international participation while preserving the values and principles deeply rooted in the history of each people; it focuses on nourishing an identity that strengthens sovereignty, autonomy and independence, on the basis of a society organized around inclusiveness and egalitarianism, ruled by a government with broad internal legitimacy and recognized and respected in the world.

44. State policy is multifaceted; it requires rights and obligations of universal application, expressed in a constitution with laws and regulations emanating from it. It concerns officials of all branches and areas of public authority, organized society in particular, and provides a model for making commitments in a scenario of consensus and flexibility, as described in figure II.

Figure II
Components of State policy



45. Government policy, which is inherent in State policy, refers to actions that are the exclusive responsibility of the government; it expresses itself through the regulation of government functions which cannot be delegated to other sectors of

society because they have to do with matters of primary importance: national security, foreign affairs and finance, among other areas. Its most notable characteristic is the exclusive exercise of authority under the law.

46. Government policy is comprehensive and directly related to the overall principles stated in the constitutions or foundational charters of each country and the international treaties which it is obligated to fulfil. Of particular interest are the conventions and resolutions adopted at the United Nations, such as the resolution establishing the Sustainable Development Goals.

47. Public policy is subordinate to government policy; it consists in deciding on and committing to actions by mutual agreement between the government and organized society. Together we can thus identify and prevent common problems, evaluate alternatives, decide on the most productive options, share risk and distribute tasks in order to achieve the proposed goals and targets. Its characteristic is agreement.

48. All public policy must be founded on trust, which is achieved on a daily basis through concrete practices of transparency and accountability, not only on the part of the government but all stakeholders. Public policy refers to the specific areas of institutional authority spelled out in the corresponding laws and the legal and administrative norms derived from them, for example, education, health, energy and labour. In any case, in the absence of agreements, the government, as a representative of the State, cannot abdicate the exercise of authority.

49. Civic policy is shared between society and government. It emanates from the commitments made between individuals, or actions delegated to them by governments, with the goal of meeting specific demands in the public interest. This policy constitutes the process of civic organization, pursuant to general legislation that facilitates and empowers it. It is necessary, therefore, to identify the relationships between the various sectors of society in their own terms and spaces, for example: in the territory (neighbours and their representatives); areas of shared or opposing interests (economics, culture, sports, recreation), and collective causes (environment, public safety, gender, civic education, housing, etc.).

50. In this context, the citizens establish their activities, set boundaries and define a course of action, evaluation methods and monitoring mechanisms; only occasionally do they require public budgetary resources, as they are prepared to assume the economic, political and social costs. Moreover, they do not want the government to intervene, except when their operational capability has been exceeded.

51. This generates collaborative models of governance for co-creation, co-production[15] or cooperation in goods and services which require the help of related institutions at the various levels of government, sectors of public administration and organized society.

52. It is at the level of civic policy that public policies are initially forged.

53. The three categories mentioned cover functions of public administration that remain effective, such as:

[15] Cristina Zurbriggen and Mariana Gonzalez Lago, "Innovacion y Co-Creacion: Nuevos Desafios para las Politicas Publicas" *Revista de las Gestion Publica*, vol. III, no. 2 (July-December 2014).

(a) Initiative: This can come from society or the government; it should prove its legitimacy and be covered by the law; it must come from organized society in order to maintain its presence on the public agenda, in the interests of seeing the country make progress and strengthen its identity and awareness of a common destiny.

(b) Diagnosis/forecasting: This activity is aimed at defining and measuring the scope and effects of problems that should be addressed by both government and society through negotiation. A number of questions can be raised: what type of social demands and/or needs should be addressed? What political and programmatic commitments must be made and met, and what administrative provisions must be adopted to improve of the ability of a group, a community or the entire nation to live together? What social, political and economic conflicts must we attempt to resolve? The responses to these and other questions lead to the adoption of public policies.

(c) Planning: This involves defining and agreeing on the content of public policies; developing and issuing the norms giving them security and force; establishing the public programme and budget and defining the best financial terms for their realization, maintenance and ongoing improvement.

(d) Organization, coordination and implementation: This includes division of responsibilities and assignment of tasks, establishment of deadlines and targets, development of tools for evaluation and monitoring, and implementation of agreements and decisions. While the government is responsible for strategy, coordination and implementation also involve the beneficiaries of the public policy in question.

(e) Evaluation: the results obtained are compared with the expected results, based on planning and monitoring during execution and afterwards, for the purpose of identifying good practices, reinforcing experiences and replicating actions that produced positive outcomes, and furthermore to detect shortcomings, errors or deviations, make corrections and eliminate or overcome pitfalls. The major responsibility for evaluation lies with society.

54. Given that the authorities exercise power in the name of society, government institutions are required not to neglect development. It is thus essential for the public administration to provide continuing professional training in order to enable each ministry or department of the State to perform its duties.

55. Consequently, public administrations must re-educate themselves in order to learn to strengthen their actions through increased emphasis on cooperation in the midst of the need for each country to lead and continuously adapt to change both domestically and internationally, since mutual influence is inevitable. The goal of the linkage between domestic and foreign policy can thus be understood as participation in the world without undermining the right to self-determination, a principle enshrined by the United Nations.

56. Efforts must continue to reduce inequalities between countries in order to enhance communication among equals and above all, close the development gap, despite ideological distance. Not just solidarity but effectiveness must be sought, in the sense of providing real opportunities to achieve a decent life for both the community and the individual.

57. In this effort, the Goals represent an opportunity to test the capacity of the political, social, economic and administrative systems of every nation and the world. Thus, the basic concept of the 2030 Agenda, "leaving no one behind", lays a course to follow in terms of time, form and content.

58. We have seen how institutional leadership combines characteristics of the three types mentioned, but in addition to legal authority, any institution must also have recognized and respected moral authority. It can be said that institutional leadership is the opposite of domination and an alternative to dictatorship and authoritarianism, since it is founded on consensus as a government strategy in accordance with each group's own social, economic and cultural situation, whether in a small hamlet or an entire nation, region or continent.

59. Like any moral authority, the authority of the United Nations is founded on a totality of wills, where the representatives of each Member State are equal to all others; agreements are simultaneously the raw material and the product that seeks to maintain world peace, protect human rights and contribute to development.

60. The Organization's unquestioned legitimacy gives relevance to its global leadership, in order to propose profoundly transformative action, in this case the Goals, as they seek to guide the work of institutional leadership at the national, regional and global levels, and in turn to create the essential conditions for their implementation in all areas.

61. The 2030 Agenda implies the possibility of changing the political-administrative, economic and social culture. It is a new paradigm sustained by the pillars of consensus and cooperation on the basis on law, justice, liberty and solidarity.

VI. Common characteristics of the Sustainable Development Goals

62. The following characteristics of the Goals should be noted, from the point of view of the tasks that must be undertaken by the public administration of the States committed to their implementation.

A. Global concern

63. The preservation of humanity on Planet Earth is in the first rank of the original purposes of the United Nations: peace, the search for solutions to international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian nature and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

64. Those purposes remain valid due to the distortions in development caused by intermittent armed conflict, the population explosion, urbanization, industrialization and other structural factors, to which new challenges have been added. At first glance those problems could appear to be insoluble because of their multiple causes, despite commitments made and efforts carried out by governments and multilateral organizations.

65. The current situation demands radical decisions to correct the course of the various isolated and disjointed actions undertaken. A first step towards global coherence was the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, which represented an agreement on the key problems that had to be addressed at the turn of the century. That initiative is continuing through the Sustainable Development Goals, agreed to by 196 countries. Each country has made a commitment to carry out the tasks in accordance with its conditions, development capabilities, policies and national priorities, in order to build a global effort that brings together nations, regions, continents and the whole world in the achievement of the Goals.

B. Holistic vision

66. The Goals allow the world's problems to be analysed from a holistic viewpoint, shared to some degree by all countries. That makes it possible to identify, on the one hand, the interdependence of peoples, who cannot avoid participating in globalization, and on the other, the multiple connections and reciprocal effects among each and every one of the Goals and their targets.

67. There is an expectation that progress achieved by some countries will have favourable effects on others, given the clear linkages among various human activities: culture, science, extractive, agricultural and industrial production, technology, trade, migratory movements (voluntary or forced), climate change prevention, and the very preservation of the planet.

68. There is also the expectation that addressing one of the Goals produces a positive "locomotive effect" that will bring others along with the overall progress, as long as the actions are synchronized and focused in the same direction. For example, Goal 1, end poverty in all its forms everywhere, must consider, in addition to economic causes, such other factors as access to education and sanitary conditions, as well as equal rights and opportunities. Therefore, without addressing the other 16 Goals, it will not be possible to meet Goal 1, nor 2, nor 4, 8, 10 and others.

69. Another innovation of the Goals is the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions — to which this author would add the cultural and political — with the spheres of individuals, prosperity, the planet, peace and justice, and alliances. This integration allows a systematic focus to be applied, which makes it possible to distinguish among the variables and cause-and-effect relationships, to establish priorities for action in each country, with rational decision-making.[16]

C. Public awareness and the rule of law

70. Public awareness means that societies and their institutions know their strengths and weaknesses, the conditions under which they are operating in the moment in history they are living through and in particular, the importance of taking action to transform a reality that, combined with local and international phenomena, hampers their full development.

[16] James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, *Teoría de la Organizacion* (Barcelona, Ariel, 1994. *Organizations*, New York, 1958.

71. The Goals should be part of the public agenda; therefore, their dissemination requires joint discussion that helps to raise awareness among all stakeholders of the urgency of solving domestic problems and, taking advantage of interdependence, helps to eliminate obstacles at the national and global levels.

72. This situation is conducive to the creation of a spirit of reciprocity or synergy among nations, in order to continue compiling experiences relating to similar issues to which satisfactory solutions have been found, making it possible to move forward more quickly since achievements will be reproduced.

73. The Goals are an attempt to make fundamental human rights a reality, protect the environment for their realization and at the same time define concrete obligations for their exercise. Their elaboration clearly followed the difficult road of consensus through to their adoption by national representatives and commitment by signatory States. It can thus be affirmed that the Goals will find fertile ground in those countries where the democratic rule of law is observed.

74. The 2030 Agenda states that the primary obligation of the public administration is to act responsibly, and, as noted, to operate at all times in accordance with the norms and ethical standards of the public service, placing the rights of all before any personal interest.

75. The operational aspects of the Goals, a matter of primary importance since any plan rests on its potential execution, will be analysed below.

VII. Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

76. In the context of public administration, implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals involves strategic organization at the level of the State, and the design and formulation of cross-cutting sectoral, territorial and community public policies which are carefully aligned in time and space.

77. There is a need to identify existing policies in each country which contribute to the Goals, and to formulate new policies in line with the 2030 Agenda.

78. On this basis, combining strategy and policies, institutional leadership profiles may be designed for the management of public institutions, both in ensuring coordination, in a transparent, authoritative and resolute manner, of the work carried out in all spheres of competence, and in the effective performance of specific actions to follow up on the outcomes sought.

A. Implementation

79. The 2030 Agenda is a far-reaching political commitment at the very highest level, whereby each political-administrative system of the world undertakes to follow a national policy that accords with its own situation and with the fulfilment of the Goals.

80. The word "implement" can be understood in three dimensions: a "macro" dimension, which sets the course, a role fulfilled by the 2030 Agenda; and two other "meso" and "micro" functional and operational dimensions which consist in

"ensuring that things happen" by undertaking a series of steps including the incorporation of a topic in the national public agenda, formulation of measures to achieve it, joint approval between the authorities and stakeholders within a normative framework, allocation or securing of resources, and launching, execution and evaluation, carried out by the public administration in a flexible manner and with ongoing coordination of planning, management and monitoring.

81. Because they are closely interrelated, the Goals constitute a guide for action which requires that institutions carry out specific administrative processes, in line with the organization of the national public authorities and in the relevant geopolitical spheres. The State or government authorities, depending on the characteristics of the country concerned, should exercise institutional leadership in the form of "macropolicy" institutionalized through the organic structures of the three branches of government.

B. Why cross-cutting policies?

82. The interdependence of public policies gives them a cross-cutting character, since a public policy can no longer be confined to a single institution or sector, but affects an entire interinstitutional, intergovernmental system and the whole of organized society, in line with its concerns, ideas and legitimate interests.

83. The slogan of the 2030 Agenda ("Leaving no one behind") goes beyond a purely administrative approach and enters right into the political sphere, as an inclusive and integral concept. The need for a cross-cutting approach derives, on the one hand, from the interdependence of the Goals, and on the other, from the imperative need for the responsible participation of society. This brings out the interdependence of government and society, since values can no longer emanate solely from authority, or even from laws, but must derive from a participatory exercise of listening, reflection, proposals, negotiation and joint action between the public and the government.

84. It follows that the only way to formulate cross-cutting policies is to avoid extremes of dogma; on the one hand, the uncritical profit-oriented view of the supposed benefits of market competition and, on the other, the view that assumes that the State or government alone is responsible for public affairs and collective wellbeing. Although the two positions frequently clash and often in a violent manner, it has not been possible to resolve the underlying conflict, which is aggravated by inequality and vested interests in maintaining the status quo.

85. In order to achieve a balance in political, economic, social and environmental development, it is essential to forge a culture of joint responsibility in managing the public space between the government, organized society and the public. Accordingly, it will not be possible to take advantage of the innovations of the 2030 Agenda unless the values of democratic, legal and socially productive coexistence can be successfully strengthened.

86. On the basis of the cross-cutting public policies incorporated in the Goals, the State or government authorities, along with social actors and with the participation of the most vulnerable groups, will be in a position to define a public agenda which will enable them to evaluate and, when necessary, adjust, the process of

achievement of the Goals. Thus, governance, as the basis of this exercise of public power, and invested with authority, would be guided by a precise definition of cross-cutting public policies to support the Agenda.

87. The cross-cutting approach therefore requires each actor not only to offer diagnoses and put forward demands, but also to define tasks and assume responsibility for their fulfilment. In this way, public policy can be considered cross-cutting if, and only if, governments and societies undertake to find joint bilateral and/or multilateral solutions to the problems and difficulties arising from the implementation of the Goals.

C. Strategic organization and coordination

88. As noted in section V, State policy can be broken down into three types of policies: strictly governmental policies (comprehensive policies involving the government itself), public policies (shared between the government and organized society) and civic policies (established through collaboration among members of the public). These three types of policies need to permeate all the jurisdictions of a country, and must be aligned in order to maintain the coherence which is essential for such a large-scale undertaking.

89. The most effective means of implementation is to rely on formal, legally recognized structures, in both sectoral and territorial spheres, in the three branches of government, establishing adequate interinstitutional channels of communication to facilitate horizontal coordination.

90. In this respect, it is proposed that the responsibilities set out in the targets linked to each Goal should be attributed to existing government administrative structures; and that institutional leadership and that of society should be strengthened, with the guidance of the State and/or government authorities, in the design and implementation of replicable public policies and the coordination of vertical (intergovernmental) and horizontal (interinstitutional) action, avoiding bureaucratic traps and promoting decision-making with the involvement of the social and private sectors.

91. The national structure should be replicated at the subnational and local levels, in regional committees and local bodies, or in any other form of territorial organization, in accordance with the political and administrative system in place. These structures can be supported by experience gained over time. In this way, without undermining national leadership, the adaptive capacity of each region would form part of a virtuous circle.

92. This type of organization would not involve additional public outlays, but would take advantage of programmatic and budgetary allocations, the existing organizational pyramid, and the dedication and talents of public servants in each institution, in aligning their routine tasks with the special tasks required by each Goal.

D. Leadership configuration

93. At the level below the State and/or government authorities, each institution needs to establish its own leadership in its spheres of competence; that leadership must be exercised in order to achieve the desired outcomes. The management of the institution needs to conduct an exercise to identify appropriate institutional leadership within its organization.

94. The objective is to share and distribute responsibilities in each individual case. Accordingly, each institution will have to exercise leadership in the implementation of the Goals in its area of expertise, through policies which are subordinated to the overarching policy of the State.

95. At this level, the profile of an institutional leader involves organizational, managerial, supervisory and motivational skills, based on the hierarchy established by the normative framework and complemented by the personal style of the officials concerned.

96. At the operational level as well, the leaders need to come from within the institution, which requires identifying, motivating and bringing on board individuals who have a sense of commitment, familiarity with institutional goals and procedures, recognition by their hierarchical superiors, ability to cooperate with their peers, acceptance by their colleagues, and a willingness to establish work teams and participate in them and to cultivate empathy, since they will be responsible for the completion of the programmes undertaken. They will have to coordinate with various types of leaders, whether traditional, charismatic or institutional, in order to formulate civic policies to underpin the Goals.

E. Inventory of public policies

97. All governments have a national project incorporating the aspirations of their societies towards which they must direct their efforts; it is therefore desirable for plans and programmes to be established which are in line with the work of the government.

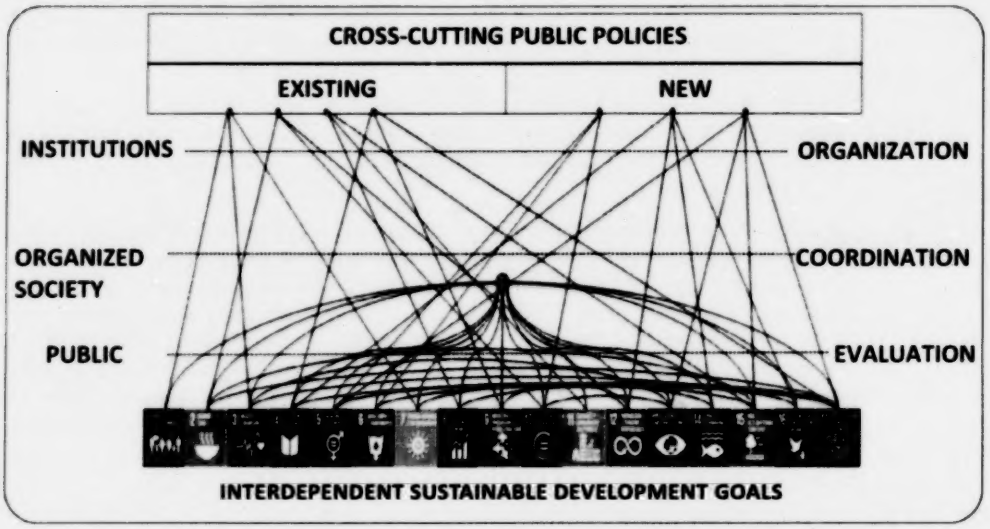
98. Thus, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is not starting from zero; instead there is the possibility of incorporating a broad range of strategies, programmes and actions which have proved effective in addressing the issues covered by the Goals.

99. Accordingly, inventories should be made of existing public policies. In carrying out this painstaking work of defining cross-cutting categories, it will be possible to determine their relationship with one or more of the Goals, leading to the formulation of clusters of public policies linked to the 2030 Agenda. The next step would be to establish the priorities for their implementation in each country, region or locality.

100. At the same time, it will be essential to identify missing topics, and then to define and formulate specific public policies to fill the gaps in respect of the Goals. This affords an opportunity to promote greater mutual understanding and joint responsibility between institutions and stakeholders.

101. In short, existing public policies which have been appropriately identified and evaluated in the light of the 2030 Agenda, along with new policies established in line with the Goals, would constitute tool kits which, once assembled, would operationalize public activities. The challenge is to organize the complex web of intersections between the multiple and varied components of the system illustrated in figure III.

Figure III
The complexity of the implementation of the Goals



1. No poverty 2. Zero hunger 3. Good health and well-being 4. Quality education 5. Gender equality 6. Clean water and sanitation 7. Affordable and clean energy 8. Decent work and economic growth 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure 10. Reduced inequalities 11. Sustainable cities and communities 12. Responsible consumption and production 13. Climate action 14. Life below water 15. Life on land 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions 17. Partnerships for the goals

Evaluation

102. The 2030 Agenda requires that the signatory countries adopt systems for monitoring and review of the progress made step by step, through the collection, organization, interpretation and dissemination of data which is reliable in terms of its relevance, precision, objectivity, clarity and accessibility to stakeholders.

103. On the basis of the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015), each country has been designing and testing monitoring and evaluation methods with targets and indicators, some of which have proved to be useful and worth retaining, with appropriate adjustments to bring them in line with the Goals, alongside new indicators.

104. In view of the need for monitoring and evaluation, it is to be hoped that governments will be prepared to afford access to information in a transparent and

comprehensive manner. Accountability and qualitative reporting will be encouraged in order to promote international cooperation through exchanges of best practices and lessons learnt; needless to say, evaluation procedures will have to respect national parameters.

105. Since the Goals require the establishment of a road map in each country, the starting point, and the objective sought, will have to be clearly established. It should be noted that most countries already have statistical procedures and resources which can be used to measure the impact of efforts made during certain time periods, in the short-, medium- and long-term, and this will help in achieving incremental outcomes.

106. In the area of public administration, as part of the effort to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, it is of crucial importance to evaluate:

(a) Individual action plans, taking into account their interdependence;

(b) The effectiveness of coordination, in order to avoid slippage, duplication and repetition and the wastage of time, effort and resources;

(c) Social communication programmes in line with each Goal in order to verify that the message is being received and that responses are collected from end-users by means of opinion polls, observation and interviews, using traditional methods and currently available technologies;[17]

(d) Social participation in the various areas of government and on various topics in order to determine the level of commitment and the responsibilities undertaken;

(e) Tangible outcomes, following the establishment of a yardstick to compare the status "before", "during" and "after" intervention by all actors in the strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

F. Multidimensionality in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

107. Lastly, these considerations lead to an integral assessment of the various dimensions in which the complex of ideas, agreements, plans, programmes, decisions, resources and actions will come into play, once the States Members of the United Nations have signed the 2030 Agenda. Efforts must now be made within each country in order to realize the Goals in the various dimensions:

(a) Political dimension: urge subnational and local governments, political parties, parliaments and congresses, judicial authorities, business and labour organizations, universities, media, non-governmental organizations etc. to take decisions and undertake commitments;

(b) Technical dimension: manage the contributions of the scientific community to substantive knowledge relating to the Goals and the application of methods and procedures appropriate to each Goal;

[17] Manuel Castells, *Comunicación y Poder* (Mexico, Siglo XXI, 2012).

(c) Administrative dimension: strengthen the work of public administration (management, coordination, monitoring, evaluation etc.), identify participatory mechanisms and means of resource mobilization and, together with society, establish development priorities, define indicators and assess risks, in particular possible conflicts of ideology or of economic and political interests in relation to the implementation of the Goals;

(d) Social dimension: promote public awareness of the importance of the Goals, motivate the public, individually and collectively, and include them in the processes for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in decisions on public policies, and develop human capital and leadership for change.

VIII. Conclusions

108. The Sustainable Development Goals represent significant progress in the world order: rather than being founded on military or economic strength, they are based on cooperation, solidarity and the pursuit of development, understood as socioeconomic and political integration, in order to improve the lives of all people and ensure the viability of preserving the planet, as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda.

109. The Goals are linked to the responsibility of governments, but this responsibility must be underpinned by societal awareness and institutional leadership which, when brought together and institutionalized, together contain the human and social capital that is vital for socially valuable change, since they impart the creativity and imagination needed for innovation.

110. As this paper demonstrates, the task requires agreement and coordination at the international, regional, national and local levels; adoption of consensual decisions; implementation of joint actions between societies and their governments; and monitoring of their progress and effects — which will be possible if institutional leadership is engaged with society — as well as institution-building and openness to participation by new actors in the design and implementation of Goals-related public policies.

111. In short, implementation is the decisive process for achieving the targets set for each goal. Consequently, there is no room for empty rhetoric: only results count, which is the greatest challenge.